

SUGGESTED REMARKS
Jon D. Lindborg
Mission Director, USAID/Philippines
HIV/AIDS National Dissemination Forum
January 31, 2006; 9:00-12:00 noon
Heritage Hotel Manila

Guests/VIP's names

Honorable Secretary Francisco Duque,
Mayor Celso Lobregat (Zamboanga City),
Undersecretary Ethelyn Nieto,
Assistant Secretary Austere Panadero, Vice
Chairman, PNAC (Philippine National AIDS
Council),
Dr. Yolanda Oliveros, Director DOH-NCDPC
(National Center for Disease Prevention and
Control),

Distinguished friends and colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

"Magandang umaga sa inyong lahat." (Good morning to all.)

I am honored and delighted to be here to participate in today's HIV/AIDS Surveillance and Education Program National Dissemination Forum. I would like to thank the organizer, the Department of Health National Epidemiology Center, for inviting me and for the privilege of giving a short message.

Over the last 12 years USAID has contributed more than US\$20 million to support the National HIV/AIDS/STD control program.

We've worked in close coordination with our partners: the Department of Health, the local government units, the Local

Enhancement and Development (LEAD) for Health Project — implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), Family Health International (FHI), The Futures Group, the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria, and local NGOs. All the people present at this forum have been wonderful partners in this effort to address the HIV/AIDS problem. As a result, the Philippines has established a strong surveillance system, engaged in successful education activities and given particular attention to the highest risk groups.

USAID congratulates its partners on the successful implementation of the 2005

Integrated HIV Behavioral and Serologic Surveillance (IHBSS), which is providing evidence that the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Philippines remains low.

Keeping the HIV seroprevalence rate among high-risk groups below 3% is an accomplishment for which the Philippine Government and all its partners must be commended. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is honored to have contributed as a donor partner, but it is the people of the Philippines who are winning the fight.

Data from the National HIV Sentinel Surveillance for 2005 indicate that

infection rates have not dramatically increased thus far in the Philippines. But we all know that we cannot afford to be complacent. The fight against AIDS continues and USAID is determined to support efforts in this regard. We are also encouraged to see the city governments recognizing the importance of HIV/AIDS surveillance and assuming responsibility for sustaining the surveillance system. These efforts can continue with support from the Philippine National AIDS Prevention and Control Program, which is equipped with a system that provides good data on HIV prevalence and risk-taking behavior.

USAID congratulates the mayors and the local governments for their commitment to manage and sustain effective STD/AIDS prevention and control programs in their cities. USAID congratulates the Department of Health - National Epidemiology Center, Management Sciences for Health, and Family Health International for their work in establishing improved methodologies for an HIV surveillance and education program that is a model for other countries with a low HIV prevalence.

USAID supports the Philippines' effort not only to counter the spread of HIV/AIDS but also that of TB in the country given the inter-relationship between the high TB

prevalence in the country and the potential explosion of HIV/AIDS.

USAID is currently supporting the expansion of the National TB Program in the delivery of DOTS (directly observed treatment-short course) services. We have provided assistance to support the National TB program through strengthening private sector participation in TB control. We want to help reduce the spread of multi-drug resistant strains of TB in the Philippines. In addition, USAID supports the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria. The US Government contributed \$500 million over two years, 25% of the \$2 billion expected total budget for the fund.

Finally, USAID congratulates the DOH for organizing this forum to disseminate the latest data on HIV/AIDS surveillance in the Philippines to inform various stakeholders of the updates on HIV/AIDS for program planning. I wish you all a fruitful forum and a pleasant morning.

"Maraming salamat po." (Thank you very much.)